



CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

GRAND ROUNDS
Thursday, November 25, 2004, 7:30 AM
Clinic Auditorium

HOLIDAY - HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

FROM DIVISIONS

- **James Yankaskas**, M.D., Professor, and **Shannon Carson**, M.D., Assistant Professor, Pulmonary Medicine, have established a model in the ICU to increase communication between patients, families and their doctors within the first few days after admission. The model with additional details has been outlined in the University HealthSystem Consortium, Palliative Care, 2004 Benchmarking Project Field Book.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Frontiers in Medicine-Genetics.** Wednesday, December 1, 9am-6pm, G-202 MBRB. Program: medicine.med.unc.edu/res/activities.htm
- **Grand Rounds, December 2.** Chronic Pain, Depression and Substance Abuse: Experience in a General Internal Medicine Cohort. **Paul Chelminski**, M.D., MPH, Assistant Professor, General Medicine and Epidemiology. 7:30am, Clinical Science Auditorium.

FROM THE CHAIR'S OFFICE

Those of you who heard Dr. Lawrence (Larry) Smith speak at Medical Grand Rounds had the opportunity to hear what I thought was one of the best presentations we've had, on the least likely of topics. Dr. Smith is the Dean for Medical Education and Director of Mt. Sinai's Institute for Education. Prior to assuming his current role, he was the Internal Medicine Residency Program Director at Mt. Sinai and very active in national residency programs.

To tell you the truth, I wasn't expecting much from this presentation. In fact, when I was about to leave my office for Grand Rounds and saw the topic was "*professionalism*," I reached for another shot of caffeine. For those of you with special interests in this area please excuse my ranting, but it seems to me that professionalism has been the topic of more articles and presentations than I care to count. And the result is always the same - a long check list of deficiencies.

As it turned out, I was in for an incredible surprise. Larry Smith's presentation was engaging, entertaining and educational, all at the same time. In keeping with my complaint that professionalism has become an omnipresent topic in medical centers, Dr. Smith began by

showing a slide tabulating the number of articles in the medical literature on professionalism over the past three decades or so. After a long period of no change, the number of articles has increased dramatically - in fact exponentially in the past several years. What really caught my attention was his explanation as to why professionalism has become such a hot topic. In brief, Dr. Smith posits that the current debate on professionalism stems from generational differences - principally core value differences of the baby boomers, generation X (Gen X) and the millennium generation.

Because of these differences in core values, each generation in medicine has a different idea about the meaning of professionalism. Of course, many of Dr. Smith's comments were broad, and general, but nonetheless insightful. For instance, the baby boomers define professionalism in reference to work ethic (where more work is always better) and that sacrifice is important in medicine. In contrast, those from Gen X see medicine with work limits and seek balance between their professional and personal lives. Baby boomers feel like they have "paid their dues" and should be respected for doing so. Gen X'ers feel that no one gets respect unless they earn it, then and there. Dr. Smith went on to say that if we argue about these core values, we will get nowhere. Core values are just that. What we need to do is to seek a common definition of professionalism, one that can be agreed upon by physicians from all generations, and serves the needs of patients. In coming years this will undoubtedly strengthen the concept of "team" care of patients.

Regardless of your beliefs about professionalism, this conference illustrated the purpose of Grand Rounds. There was a true sense of community in our department and a healthy debate following Dr. Smith's presentation. Dr. Smith was generous enough to provide us with his slides from Grand Rounds which can be found at medicine.med.unc.edu/education/lsmith.ppt.

We thank Larry Smith for helping us continue the tradition of Grand Rounds and look forward to continued lively presentations in the future.

Questions or submissions, contact Rosemary_Simpson@med.unc.edu